

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

*In the Matter of:*

Rosser Post Office  
Rosser, Texas 75157

Docket No. A2011-23

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
COMMENTS REGARDING APPEAL  
(September 7, 2011)

On July 14, 2011, the Postal Regulatory Commission (Commission) received an appeal postmarked July 8, 2011, from postal customer Chris Taliaferro (Petitioner) objecting to the discontinuance of the Post Office at Rosser, Texas.<sup>1</sup> On July 19, 2011, the Commission issued Order No. 764, its Notice and Order Accepting Appeal and Establishing Procedural Schedule under 39 U.S.C. § 404(d). The Commission received no additional written communications from customers of the Rosser Post Office. The Petitioner did not file a Form 61 or initial brief in support of the petition. In accordance with Order No. 764, the administrative record was filed with the Commission on July 29, 2011.

The petition for review received by the Commission raises three main issues: (1) the effect on postal services, (2) the impact upon the Rosser community, and (3) the calculation of economic savings expected to result from discontinuing the Rosser Post Office. As reflected in the administrative record of this proceeding, the Postal Service gave these issues serious consideration. In addition, consistent with the Postal

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<sup>1</sup> The Notice of Filing filed by the Commission on July 15, 2011, includes a letter dated July 5, 2011, addressed to the Commission from Chris Taliaferro; a letter dated July 7, 2011 addressed to the Commission from Chris Taliaferro and Slone Taliaferro; and an e-mail dated July 7, 2011. See Notice of Filing Under 39 U.S.C. § 404(d), Docket No. A2011-23, July 15, 2011. In these comments, these three documents are referred to as the "petition for review."

Service's statutory obligations and Commission precedent,<sup>2</sup> the Postal Service gave consideration to a number of other issues, including the impact upon postal employees. Accordingly, the determination to discontinue the Rosser Post Office should be affirmed.

### **Background**

The Final Determination To Close the Rosser, TX Post Office and Establish Service by Rural Route Service (FD), as well as the administrative record, indicate that the Rosser Post Office provides EAS-11 level service "from 8:00 to 16:00 Monday – Friday, 09:00 to 11:00 on Saturday and lobby hours of 24 on Monday – Friday and 24 on Saturday" to 147 Post Office Box customers. The Rosser Post Office has no general delivery customers. FD at 2.<sup>3</sup> The postmaster position at the Rosser Post Office became vacant when the postmaster was promoted on March 29, 2008. Upon implementation of the final determination, the noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service.<sup>4</sup> The average number of daily retail window transactions at the Rosser Post Office is nineteen. Revenue has generally been low and declining: \$15,438.00 in FY 2008 (40 revenue units); \$13,821.00 in FY 2009 (36 revenue units); and \$12,347.00 in FY 2010 (32 revenue units).<sup>5</sup> The Rosser Post Office has no meter or permit customers. FD at 2; Item No. 18, Fact Sheet, at 1; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2, 9.

Upon implementation of the final determination, delivery and retail services will be provided by rural route service administered by the Scurry Post Office, an EAS-16

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<sup>2</sup> See 39 U.S.C. 404(d)(2)(A).

<sup>3</sup> In these comments, specific items in the administrative record, other than the FD are referred to as "Item \_\_\_\_\_."

<sup>4</sup> FD, at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9.

<sup>5</sup> FD, at 2; Item No. 18, Fact Sheet; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

level office located six miles away, which has 193 available Post Office Boxes. FD at 1; Item No. 18, Fact Sheet, at 1; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2, 9.

The Postal Service followed the proper procedures that led to the posting of the FD. All issues raised by the customers of the Rosser Post Office were considered and properly addressed by the Postal Service. The Postal Service complied with all notice requirements. In addition to the posting of the Proposal and FD, customers received notice through other means. Questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Rosser Post Office. FD at 2; Item No. 20, Questionnaire Instruction Letter from Post Office Review Coordinator; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2. A letter from the Manager of Post Office Operations, Coppell, TX was also made available to postal customers, which advised customers that the Postal Service was evaluating whether to discontinue the Rosser Post Office, and that effective and regular service could be provided through rural route delivery and retail services available at the Scurry Post Office. The letter invited customers to complete and return a customer questionnaire and to express their opinions about the service they were receiving and the effects of a possible change involving rural route delivery. Item No. 21, Letter to Customer, at 1. The returned customer questionnaires and Postal Service response letters appear in the administrative record in Item No. 22. In addition, representatives from the Postal Service were available at the Fire Station in Rosser for a community meeting on February 15, 2011, to answer questions and provide information to customers. FD at 1; Item No. 21, Letter to Customer, at 1; Item No. 24, Community Meeting Roster; Item No. 25, Community Meeting Analysis; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2. Customers received

formal notice of the Proposal and FD through postings at nearby facilities. The Proposal was posted with an invitation for public comment at the Rosser Post Office and the Scurry Post Office from March 30, 2011 to May 31, 2011. FD, at 7; Item No. 31, Instructions to Postmaster/OIC to Post Proposal, at 1; Item No. 36, Round-date stamped Proposals. The FD was posted at the same two Post Offices starting on July 1, 2011, as confirmed by the round-dated FD cover sheets that appear in the administrative record.

In light of the postmaster vacancy, a minimal workload, low and declining office revenue,<sup>6</sup> the variety of delivery and retail options (including the convenience of rural delivery and retail service),<sup>7</sup> very little recent growth in the area,<sup>8</sup> minimal impact upon the community, and the expected financial savings,<sup>9</sup> the Postal Service issued the FD.<sup>10</sup> Regular and effective postal services will continue to be provided to the Rosser community in a cost-effective manner upon implementation of the final determination. FD at 2.

Each of the issues raised by the Petitioner is addressed in the paragraphs which follow.

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<sup>6</sup> See note 5 and accompanying text,

<sup>7</sup> FD, at 2-3, 6-7, 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2-3, 5-9.

<sup>8</sup> FD, at 4; Item No. 16, Community Survey Sheet; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 4, 8.

<sup>9</sup> FD, at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9.

<sup>10</sup> FD, at 7-9.

### **Effect on Postal Services**

Consistent with the mandate in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iii) and as addressed throughout the administrative record, the Postal Service considered the effect of closing the Rosser Post Office on postal services provided to Rosser customers. The closing is premised upon providing regular and effective postal services to Rosser customers.

The Petitioner, in his petition for review, raises the issue of the effect on postal services of the Rosser Post Office's closing, noting the convenience of the Rosser Post Office and requesting its retention. The Petitioner expresses particular concern about the effect of the closing on the customers of the Rosser Post Office who do not own a car; the quality of the rural service provided by the Scurry Post Office; the sanctity of the mail; inconveniences in purchasing money orders and stamps, the sending and receiving of certified letters, registered letters and CODs; and receiving the same postal service provided to those who live in urban areas. Each of these concerns was considered by the Postal Service.

The effect of the closing on the customers of the Rosser Post Office who do not own a car was considered by the Postal Service. The Postal Service explained that services provided at the Post Office will be available from the carrier and customers will not have to travel to another Post Office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order application forms are available for customer convenience. Item No. 23, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 5; Item No. 25, Community Meeting Analysis, at 1; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 5-6; Item No. 40, Analysis of 60-Day Posting Comments; FD, at 3, 7.

The quality of rural service provided by the Scurry Post Office was considered by the Postal Service. The Postal Service explained that its carriers strive to provide service at approximately the same time on a daily basis. Mail volumes and weather conditions, however, can affect delivery times. Rural carriers are required to serve the route expeditiously. Item No. 23, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 2-3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2-3; FD at 2-3, 5.

The sanctity of the mail is always a concern of the Postal Service. The Postal Service explained that customers may place a lock on their mailboxes. The mailbox must have a slot large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. Item No. 23, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 2; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 5; FD, at 5.

The effect of the closing on the provision of various postal services including the purchase of money orders and stamps, the sending and receiving of certified letters, registered letters, and CODs was considered by the Postal Service. The Postal Service explained that money orders can be purchased from the rural carrier. Item No. 25, Community Meeting Analysis, at 1; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6; FD, at 8. The Postal Service explained that if a customer desires special services from the rural carrier the customer may leave a note in the customer's mailbox instructing the carrier to sound his horn, and then meet the carrier to receive services. The rural carrier will accept any letters or packages for mailing. The carrier will estimate the cost and provide a receipt for any money received. On the following delivery day, the carrier will provide change or a bill for the amount over the estimate. Retail services may also be obtained at the

Scurry Post Office. Item No. 23, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 2-3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2-3; FD, at 2-3.

Upon the implementation of the final determination, delivery and retail services will be provided by rural route delivery emanating from the Scurry Post Office. The window service hours of the Scurry Post Office are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. FD, at 2. In addition, customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail. FD, at 7.

The Postal Service has considered the impact of closing the Rosser Post Office upon the provision of postal services to Rosser customers. Rural route service provides similar access to retail service, alleviating the need to travel to the Post Office. FD at 2-3, 6-7, 9; Item No. 23, Postal Customer Questionnaire Analysis, at 4-5; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 5-6, 8; Item No. 40, Analysis of 60-Day Posting Comments. Thus, the Postal Service has properly concluded that all Rosser customers will continue to receive regular and effective service via rural route service.

### **Effect Upon the Rosser Community**

The Postal Service is obligated to consider the effect of its decision to close the Rosser Post Office upon the Rosser community. 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(i). While the primary purpose of the Postal Service is to provide postal services, the statute recognizes the substantial role in community affairs often played by local Post Offices, and requires consideration of that role whenever the Postal Service proposes to close or consolidate a Post Office.

Rosser is an incorporated rural community located in Kaufman County. The Kaufman County Sheriff's Department provides police protection. The community is administered politically by Rosser City Hall, with fire protection provided by the Rosser Fire Department. FD, at 8; Item No. 33, Proposal at 8. The questionnaires completed by Rosser customers indicate that, in general, the retirees, farmers, commuters, and others who reside in Rosser must travel elsewhere for other supplies and services. See Item No. 22, Returned customer questionnaires and Postal Service response letters, at 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 21, 24, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 48, 51, 54, 57, 60, 63, 66, 69, 75, 78, 81, 87, 90, 92, 95, 98, 101, 104, 107, 110, 113, 116, 118, 121, 125, 128, 138, 141, 144, 150, 153, 155, and 158.

The effect of the closing of the Rosser Post Office upon the Rosser community was extensively considered by the Postal Service, as reflected in the administrative record. FD, at 3-4, 8; Item No 16, Community Survey Sheet, at 1; Item No. 21, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 2-3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 3-4, 8; Item No. 40, Analysis of 60-Day Posting Comments. The Postal Service explained that a community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. FD, at 3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 3. Communities generally require regular and effective postal services and these will continue to be provided to the Rosser community. Carrier service is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community. FD, at 4, Item No. 33, Proposal, at 4.

The Petitioner expresses concern about the effect of the closing of the Rosser Post Office on local businesses. That the Rosser Post Office plays a role in the



community other than just providing postal services was considered by the Postal Service. FD at 3-4; Item No. 23, Analysis of Questionnaires, at 2-3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 3-4.

In addition, the Postal Service has concluded that nonpostal services provided by the Rosser Post Office can be provided by the Scurry Post Office. Government forms usually provided by the Post Office are also available by contacting local government agencies. FD at 8; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 8.

Thus, the Postal Service has met its burden, as set forth in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(i), by considering the effect of closing the Rosser Post Office on the community served by the Rosser Post Office.

### **Economic Savings**

Postal officials also properly considered the economic savings that would result from the proposed closing, as provided under 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv). The Postal Service estimates that rural route carrier service would cost the Postal Service substantially less than maintaining the Rosser Post Office and would still provide regular and effective service. Item No. 21, Letter to Customer, at 1. The estimated annual savings associated with discontinuing the Rosser Post Office are \$30,753.00. FD at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9.

The Postal Service has determined that rural route service is the most cost-effective solution for providing regular and effective service to the Rosser community.

Economic factors are one of several factors that the Postal Service considered, and economic savings have been calculated as required for discontinuance studies,

which is noted throughout the administrative record, consistent with the mandate in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv). FD, at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9.

The Postal Service determined that carrier service is more cost-effective than maintaining the Rosser postal facility and postmaster position. FD, at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9. The Postal Service's estimates are supported by record evidence, in accordance with the Postal Service's statutory obligations. The Postal Service, therefore, has considered the economic savings to the Postal Service resulting from such a closing, consistent with its statutory obligations and Commission precedent. See 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv).

### **Effect on Employees**

As documented in the record, the impact on postal employees is minimal. The postmaster was promoted on March 29, 2008. Upon implementation of the final determination, the noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service. The record shows that no other employee would be affected by this closing. FD, at 9; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 9. Therefore, in making the determination, the Postal Service considered the effect of the closing on the employees at the Rosser Post Office, consistent with its statutory obligations. See 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(ii).

### **Conclusion**

As reflected throughout the administrative record, the Postal Service has followed the proper procedures and carefully considered the effect of closing the Rosser Post Office on the provision of postal services and on the Rosser community, as well as

the economic savings that would result from the proposed closing, the effect on postal employees, and other factors, consistent with the mandate of 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A).

After taking all factors into consideration, the Postal Service determined that the advantages of discontinuance outweigh the disadvantages. In addition, the Postal Service concluded that after the discontinuance, the Postal Service will continue to provide effective and regular service to Rosser customers. FD, at 9. The Postal Service respectfully submits that this conclusion is consistent with and supported by the administrative record and is in accord with the policies stated in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A). The Postal Service's decision to close the Rosser Post Office should, accordingly, be affirmed.

The Postal Service respectfully requests that the determination to close the Rosser Post Office be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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